IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel Claims 3, 4, 7, 9 and 11-13 without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter presented therein.

Please amend Claims 1, 2, 5, 6, 8 and 10 as follows.

1. (Currently Amended) An image processing apparatus which performs a correction based on a feature amount of image data of a face region, the image processing apparatus comprising:

~~image obtaining unit, adapted to obtain image data from a recording medium on which the image data has been recorded;~~

a face region extraction unit, adapted to extract ~~a~~ the face region of a person from ~~the~~ input image data ~~obtained by said image obtaining unit~~;

a judgment unit , adapted to judge whether or not an area of the face region is larger than a predetermined value;

a determination unit, adapted to determine, in a case where it is judged by the judgment unit that the area of the face region is larger than the predetermined value, whether or not to perform the correction to the input image data based on a first feature amount of the input image data of the face region and a second feature amount of corrected image data of the face region; and

an image correction unit, adapted to perform the correction of the input image data in a case where it is determined by the determination unit to perform the correction to the input image data,

wherein the image correction unit does not perform the correction to the input image data in a case where it is judged by the judgment unit that the area of the face region is smaller than the predetermined value, and in a case where it is determined by the determination unit not to perform the correction to the input image data

~~image feature amount calculation unit, adapted to calculate an image feature amount of the face region extracted from the image data by said face region extraction unit;~~

~~correction effect inference unit, adapted to infer whether or not a correction effect can be obtained by correcting a characteristic of the image data, based on the image feature amount calculated by said image feature amount calculation unit, and to output a first inference result based on the inference; and~~

~~image correction unit, adapted to, in a case where it is inferred by said correction effect inference unit that the correction effect can be obtained based on the first inference result, correct the characteristic of the image data based on the image feature amount and thus output post-correction image data.~~

2. (Currently Amended) An image processing apparatus according to Claim 1, ~~wherein~~

further comprising a discrimination unit, adapted to discriminate whether or not a photographing mode corresponding to the input image data is a person mode,

wherein the image correction unit does not perform the correction to the input image data in a case where it is discriminated by the discrimination unit that the photographing mode corresponding to the input image data is the person mode.

~~a photographing apparatus for photographing a subject and thus obtaining the image data includes plural kinds of photographing modes, a person mode which is optimum to photograph the person is included in the plural kinds of photographing modes, and, in a case where photographing information including information concerning the photographing mode has been recorded together with the image data on the recording medium, said image obtaining unit obtains the photographing information together with the image data from the recording medium, and~~

~~said image processing apparatus further comprises~~

~~photographing mode discrimination unit, adapted to discriminate whether or not the photographing mode included in the photographing information obtained by said image obtaining unit is the person mode, and~~

~~correction process control unit, adapted to, only in a case where it is discriminated by said photographing mode discrimination unit that the photographing mode is the person mode, control said face region extraction unit, said image feature amount calculation unit, said correction effect inference unit and said image correction unit to perform a correction process of the image data~~.

3-4. (Canceled)

5. (Currently Amended) An image processing apparatus according to Claim [[4]]1, wherein the first image feature amount and the ~~post-correction~~ second image feature amount are ~~statistical distributions of pixel data in the face region~~statistics.

6. (Currently Amended) An image processing apparatus according to Claim 5, wherein the ~~statistical distribution of the pixel data is~~ statistics are based on a lightness histogram ~~indicating a distribution of lightness of each pixel or a hue histogram indicating a distribution of hue of each pixel~~.

7. (Canceled)

8. (Currently Amended) An image processing method which performs a correction based on a feature amount of image data of a face region, the method comprising:

~~a first step of obtaining image data from a recording medium on which the image data has been recorded;~~

~~a second step of~~ extracting a face region of a person from ~~the~~ input image data ~~obtained in said first step~~;

judging whether or not an area of the face region is larger than a predetermined value;

determining, in a case where it is judged in the judging step that the area of the face region is larger than the predetermined value, whether or not to perform the correction to the

input image data based on a first feature amount of the input image data of the face region and a second feature amount of corrected image data of the face region; and

correcting the input image data in a case where it is determined in said determining step to perform the correction to the input image data,

wherein said correcting step does not perform the correction to the input image data in a case where it is judged in said judging step that the area of the face region is smaller than the predetermined value and in the case where it is determined in said determining step not to perform the correction to the input image data.

~~a third step of calculating an image feature amount of the face region extracted from the image data in said second step;~~

~~a fourth step of inferring whether or not a correction effect can be obtained by correcting a characteristic of the image data, based on the image feature amount calculated in said third step, and of outputting a first inference result based on the inference; and~~

~~a fifth step of, in a case where it is inferred in said fourth step that the correction effect can be obtained based on the first inference result, correcting the characteristic of the image data based on the image feature amount and thus outputting post-correction image data~~.

9. (Canceled)

10. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable recording medium containing ~~which records~~ a program for causing a computer to execute a process to perform a correction based on a feature amount of image data of a face region, the process comprising:

~~a first step of obtaining image data from a recording medium on which the image data has been recorded;~~

~~a second step of~~ extracting a face region of a person from ~~the~~ input image data ~~obtained in said first step~~;

judging whether or not an area of the face region is larger than a predetermined value;

determining, in a case where it is judged in said judging step that the area of the face

region is larger than the predetermined value, whether or not to perform the correction to the input image data based on a first feature amount of the input image data of the face region and a second feature amount of corrected image data of the face region; and

correcting the input image data in a case where it is determined in said determining step to perform the correction to the input image data,

wherein said correcting step does not perform the correction to the input image data in a case where it is judged in said judging step that the area of the face region is smaller than the predetermined value and in a case where it is determined in said determining step not to perform the correction to the input image data~~a third step of calculating an image feature amount of the face region extracted from the image data in said second step;~~

~~a fourth step of inferring whether or not a correction effect can be obtained by correcting a characteristic of the image data, based on the image feature amount calculated in said third step, and of outputting a first inference result based on the inference; and~~

~~a fifth step of, in a case where it is inferred in said fourth step that the correction effect can be obtained based on the first inference result, correcting the characteristic of the image data based on the image feature amount and thus outputting post-correction image data~~.

11-13. (Canceled)